

Dear Members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Isabella Marin. I am a resident of New Haven and am testifying to communicate my strong support for Connecticut SB 753, *An Act Concerning the Counting of Incarcerated Persons for the Purpose of Determining Legislative Districts*.

One of the reasons that I admire this country is its commitment to equitable democratic representation. This will remain theoretical until state governments like Connecticut's stop artificially inflating the voting power of white residents by exploiting inmates.

Stopping the practice of counting incarcerated people as residents of the districts in which their correctional facilities are located is imperative to increasing the representativeness of Connecticut's General Assembly. The counting of incarcerated persons, the vast majority of whom cannot vote, as members of the legislative districts in which their carceral facilities are located affords inappropriate electoral power to said districts. Moreover, incarcerated persons who can vote must do so in the districts where they lived prior to incarceration. The status quo inaccurately invests legislative authority and exacerbates racial inequities in government, given that Connecticut districts housing correctional facilities have a far higher proportion of white voters than compared to local incarcerated populations.

At the center of this bill is the issue of racial injustice. The current system exploits largely Black and Brown incarcerated populations to amplify the voting power of majority White legislative districts, counting inmates in population metrics while denying them a voice. If they are counted into the population for legislative districts, they should all be able to vote in the district they live in. Being counted without the ability to vote there is contradictory and exploits prison populations, which in turn is racially exploitative since people of color are disproportionately represented in prisons.

Every resident of Connecticut deserves equal representation in the state legislature. I ask the committee to consider passing S.B. 753 to enshrine that same principle in law.

Sincerely,

Isabella Marin
New Haven, CT